

The house soundly defeated a land swap bill last week that would have allowed two American Indian tribes in Michigan to open casinos far from their reservations. The bill (HR 2176), rejected 121-298 on June 25, had the support of some Michigan lawmakers, who said it would help the state's e...

The house soundly defeated a land swap bill last week that would have allowed two American Indian tribes in Michigan to open casinos far from their reservations.

The bill (HR 2176), rejected 121-298 on June 25, had the support of some Michigan lawmakers, who said it would help the state's economy.

However, opponents, including other members from Michigan, said the bill would set a dangerous precedent encouraging other tribes to pursue casinos away from their own lands.

"Let's not set a trend. Let's not use the Indian Tribes in order to dot the urban and suburban communities of this country with monopoly gambling operations," said John Campbell, R-Calif.

Bill supporter Candice S. Miller, R-Michigan, said, "Clearly, most of the opposition to this bill comes from people who already have theirs and don't want others to have it. They don't want competition. And I think that's un-American."

The bill would have allowed the American Indian Tribes to swap their claims to 110 acres of land in Michigan's Upper Peninsula for property close to Detroit and its suburbs. The land would be put in trust held by the federal government.

The bill, sponsored by Bart Stupak, D-Mich., would have given the Bay Mills Indian Community land rights in Port Huron. It incorporated another measure (HR 4115) sponsored by John D. Dingell, D-Mich., that would have given the Sault Ste. Marie tribe of Chippewa Indians land in either Flint or Romulus. In 2002, both tribes entered into agreements with the state to own land in Southeast Michigan. Congressional action was necessary to make the swap official.